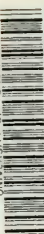


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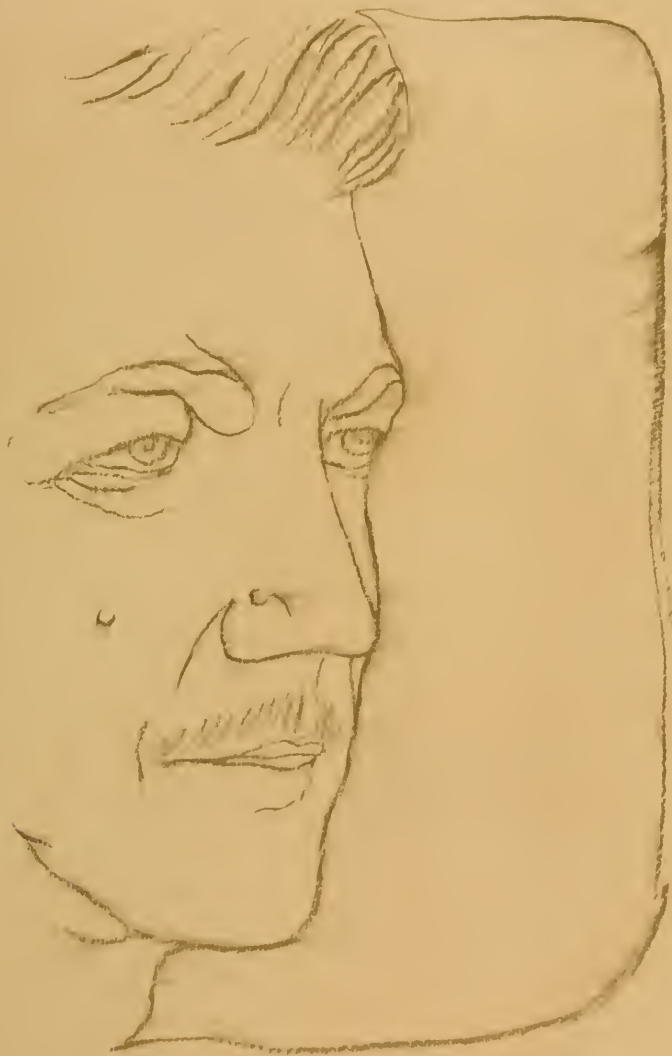
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*John Drainie, 1916-1966*

It is a rare privilege to be associated with greatness, and we, the members of the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists, have always been aware of the honour of counting John Drainie among our fellows. Everyone who knew him, worked with him, saw or heard him perform, will feel a sense of personal loss at the news of his death. This book is an expression of that loss in the words of a few of those directors, writers and performers who were John Drainie's friends and colleagues.

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If John Drainie had chosen to be a Pharmacist instead of a Radio Actor, the prescription for his professional life might well have read as follows: Rx; One Part of the White Knight's riding and singing ability; One Part of the poignant ineptness of Richard the Second; One Part of the charming fatuity of Mr. Justice Shallow; One Part of Owen Glendower's mad magic; One Part of Mr. Winkle's terrifying skill (on skates); One Part of Alan Breck Stewart's uncompromising Highland bravado; One Part of the urbane williness of Sir John A. Macdonald; One Part of King Henry the Fifth's common-sense soldier, Williams, in the pre-dawn before Agincourt; One Part of Senator Windheaver's funeral oration to Sarah Binks (our dead, local girl of Willows, Saskatchewan). One Part of Stephen Leacock's financial wizard and barber, Jefferson Thorpe; One Part of W. O. Mitchell's Jake; One Part of the star, Betelgeuse (as appreciated by Mr. Arcularis); One Part of the late William Lyon Mackenzie King's flat and fatuous oratory; One Part of his own Short Story readings; One Mile of Van Horne's fabulous Railroad. Add to all this; One Gallon of Attention to Detail reduced by the heat of rehearsal to One Ounce of Furious Concentration; drop in, carefully, a soupcon of any dialect required; sprinkle liberally with a background of wide reading; scatter over all an inexhaustible supply of delicate voice control, finely disciplined emotion, untidy hair (mostly), wrinkled clothing (frequently), painfully bad limp (always),

a decent face with a curiously gentle smile and there was John Drainie at his superb best before any microphone. John Robert Drainie began work in Vancouver as a callow youth and (of all things) as a Commercial Announcer! Frankly, I never believed that he was cut out for this branch of the profession but his attitude towards it was typical. He simply conceived the character of a Commercial Announcer and then proceeded to "play" the part. Next, Radio Drama. Writers soon came to value Drainie for their unusual characters. Producers re-arranged their schedules to include him in their most difficult casting. And he loved every bit of it and the harder the part, the happier he was. In retrospect, it has been my experience that only one thing galled Drano almost beyond endurance; sloppy direction. There was no use telling him that such-and-such a part was quite simple; "give a reading just like Lionel Barrymore," or whoever, ad nauseam. Never! That sort of direction was not for John. Not only did it throw him into a bad case of the sulks but it simultaneously raised his output of four-letter words (excellent even at normal temperature and pressure) to an appalling degree. His old friend and mentor, Andrew Allan once said, "I never direct Drainie. I very casually suggest, and that, obliquely, just what I have in mind. He takes it from there." And he did. The difficult parts he conceived almost at once; the impossible parts, however, took him just a bit longer. All this, of course, if he had had his

script in advance. I am personally convinced from frequent observation that without a hurried look at the "words" before the first reading began that he was, beyond doubt, the lousiest impromptu reader it has been my anguish to hear. Indeed, his first readings were so incredibly awkward as to cause newcomers, who didn't know him, to shake their heads sadly and mutter "even with no lessons, I could do better than that." But just give Drano time to commune with the text; to think about its meaning; to get himself into that particular character's frame of mind; to shut out the studio; to forget his worries, his family, his friends, his commitments; and, finally, to mark that script with his own brand of cabalistic but unintelligible hieroglyphics, and there was none to come near his final performance.

Tape was a God-send to John. He used it, sometimes for voice storage (his own or someone else's). But always, he used it, not only to analyse what was being said but precisely *how* it was being spoken. Hence his reproductions of the voices of MacKenzie King, F. D. R., Stephen Leacock, and countless others. His experiments in the field of tape were endless. He even went so far as to tape a simple phrase (Three Blind Mice); play it backwards; memorize the "backward word sounds"; speak it backwards; record it and then play *that* backwards all to see if his ear was as good and devious as he insisted it should be! As vocalized punctuation fascinated Victor Borge, so, style of type face and hand-writing



fascinated John. It was his firm belief that, for example, Chaucer read in the original could be so produced by the voice that the listener would get, not only the words, but also, and as a bonus, some of the flavor of the Century in which they had been set down. I have heard Drano vocalize 20th century type face, 19th century type face and 18th century type face. And, *mirabile dictu*, I was made very much aware of the difference. His signing of the Magna Carta on Radio Runnymede is a classic to this day. We, in the studio, heard the painful and unwilling signature forced from him by the Chief Baron; the listener at home, "saw" King John Drainie write it! What a pity that Television found no time for Drano's imitation of a pressure cooker,

the pay-telephone, the typewriter and, most fabulous sound of all, spitting into the Grand Canyon and scoring a bullseye in a spittoon conveniently located one mile straight down!

He had a strange tendency to absent mindedness. I believe the few occasions that he missed his cues were caused by his day-dreaming about his current part.

And, sometimes, wild things resulted. Like the famous occasion he didn't make it for the teaser opening of one of Andrew Allan's early Stages. (It turned out that Drano was in the men's room! Improving the graffiti, I trust.)

Or the time he played a deep-sea diver in a light-hearted Science script. Here, he confidently elected to provide, by his own voice, the bubbling sounds from his

diving helmet. Excellently well done these underwater sounds were. Except that when the emotion of the bubbles began to match the emotion of the diver, he broke himself up completely, hilariously and coast-to-coast on the National Network. The fragile, acetate recording of this delicious fiasco has long since been worn into and past the quick and is stored only in the memory banks of those of us fortunate enough to have been there.

Twenty-five years of this, I knew and relished. For the Man, I had affection; for the Artist, respect; for John, love. Now his dress rehearsal has finished. The studio is silent. For me, it will be a long and lonely coffee break.

---

*by Tommy Tweed*



I knew John Drainie for about eighteen years — the length of time I've worked at the CBC — but not with that special intimacy that links those actors, writers and producers who worked together in drama in what we now think of as the golden age of CBC radio.

But there were occasions when I watched John — and listened to him, which was even more important — at the centre of that group of radio artists. Twice we broadcast Tommy Tweed's two-part biography of Sir John A. Macdonald, "The Honorable Member for Kingston", and both times I sat in on Andrew Allan's productions from their beginnings through the live broadcast itself. It was then that I really saw the way Drainie would feel his way into a character from the introspective, moody and even seemingly offhand manner of the first rehearsals until finally he *was* John A. fighting his last election, sick, old and weary, but still the complete and crafty politician. By that time Tommy Tweed was in tears, and in the booth we were not much better off.

Later Mavor Moore produced several

satirical revues for radio, and again I went to the rehearsals, where John and that marvellous, flexible voice of his were everywhere. He was a cracked-voiced singer from a Newfoundland outpost at one moment, as authentic as the real thing ever was. Or he was a dumb hockey player giving an interview that was a pastiche of non-sequiters and unfinished sentences. It was a characterization that should have troubled the N.H.L.

governors far more than the rebellion of a player as intelligent as Carl Brewer. But my continuing relationship with John Drainie came through his readings of poetry and short stories. A few years ago we had some conversations, and finally he began his own series of readings, "Stories With John Drainie" which kept him on the air five times a week for thirty-nine weeks in the year.

I didn't really believe that he could manage it, and at the beginning we both had some anxious moments because we were uncertain whether we could get enough stories to keep the series going. But the stories came in, and John not only read them on the air, he also did editorial

work with the writers, he worried about his writers and his listeners, and he believed in his writers, his listeners and the concept of the series itself. It was by far the largest market for fiction in this country, and it was there because John Drainie was a dedicated and romantic man with the faith and the determination to sustain the unrelenting demands of a daily program.

Our friendship during the years when "Stories With John Drainie" was broadcast was warm, there was respect on both sides, and we were casual and a trifle ironic with each other. I did the house-keeping for the series, his was the talent. We didn't ask each other awkward questions. When he was unable to do anything else as he was dying this fall, he continued his work on "Stories With John Drainie" to the very end. That is the best tribute the series could ever have. As someone who worked with him on "Stories With John Drainie", and who misses and remembers him, I can say that his writers and his listeners have been sadly deprived by his death.

---

*by Robert Weaver*



There came a message through space  
... from Crocus, that mythical little town  
in South Central Southwestern Saskat-  
chewan, founded and famed by W. O.  
Mitchell, the poet laureate of the district.  
A sad message it was ... unbelievable  
even ... but not unexpected since none of  
us can escape the Button-Moulder's sharp  
tap on our shoulder, when time's up and  
there's no more chance to beg for "respite  
till next Crossroads".  
Seems that that tall, thin fellow, with the  
big casting-ladle in his hand, had come  
down Government Road in the early  
morn' ... down to the little farm with the  
yellow frame-house, and called on Jake  
Trumper ... the Per Cynt of the prairies  
... Ma's hired hand. "Time to go, Jake ...  
Back into the ladle to be melted down"  
he said, and Jake had followed ... so the  
message told me.  
Hard to fathom ... the shock! Too early  
to call 'im ... it seems. Not an old man.  
And yet it's true ... for I just heard the  
big iron gate in the stone-fence 'round  
the Quiet Hill clang shut. It opens inward  
only ... so I guess he won't be back. I  
even saw the figure of a man slowly climb  
the path up to top of the slope o'erlooking  
the country-side ... saw him stop for a  
moment to look back, as if he wanted to  
see if anyone had noticed him leaving ...  
were missin' him, maybe.

A gentle breeze rustled the long sweet-  
grass on the peaceful hillside ... I  
heard it whisper ... "You're welcome to  
a bit of rest, old boy ... It's been a hard  
day ... " I thought I could even hear the  
voices of his old friends from Crocus  
come to greet him ... friends who'd gone  
up the hill before him ... "That's nice!",  
he'd say, his weather-beaten face creased  
in a smile. So now, I reckon there'll be  
tall stories to tell again ... up there, as  
tall as they ever were, when Jake held  
forth in Maple Leaf Beer Parlor ... or at  
the Sanitary Cafe ... any place, for that  
matter, where two or three old cronies  
would get together for a chin-wag or an  
argument, big enough to "give a feller  
heartburn".  
So Jake Trumper is gone ... Hmmm!  
You do remember Jake ... and The Kid  
... and Ma ... , don't you ... and the  
farm three miles from town on Govern-  
ment Road? Sure you met Old Daddy  
Johnson - 104 if he's a day - Repeat  
Godfrey, the barber ... fat and jovial  
Mayor MacTaggart ... and dry and crusty  
Miss Henshaw, the teacher ... Moses  
Lefthand and Mrs. Candy and all her  
little gum-drops ... and Sonny Cold-tart  
and His Duleet Five, that lovely combo  
playing at the barn-dances ... Mr. Tucker  
and His Crocus Band and the Sunday  
Concerts in the Park and the picnics of

the "Louis Riel Chapter of the IODE"  
... If you were around in the 50's you  
can't have missed 'em ... all these  
wonderful people in the most wonderful  
town ... And in the midst of this throng  
of quaint but wholesome folk ... that  
loveable rascal Jake! We're not all too  
young to have known this world of Make-  
Believe made so real to us by the man  
who worked ... and lived ... and *was*  
Jake Trumper ... John Drainie.  
Look up the hill-side now ... and you,  
too, will see him standing there ... a  
broad smile on his lips ... Jake's beat-up  
old hat at a jaunty angle ... the faded  
blue-patched old overalls flapping in the  
gentle prairie breeze ... It's Jake and  
John in one!  
Come, let us wave to him ... to let him  
know how deeply grateful we are for the  
many gifts of free laughter ... the  
warmth of Joy ... the truth of great  
artistry he so lavishly showered on us  
throughout a short, but remarkably  
rich life-span.  
As Jake Trumper ... as the Man with A  
Story ... as kings and paupers, poets,  
peers and peasants ... as "Everyman"  
... from all walks of life ... his God-given  
talent gave us a gallery of portraits ...  
forever to be cherished.  
Humbly we thank him for his generosity  
... 'Twas so nice he could be with us.

---

*by Esse Lungh*



I learned my craft, week by week,  
watching this kind-hearted, sincere  
wonderful human being John Drainie, as  
he brought understanding, warmth and  
life to the role of Jake. Under his paternal

gaze the Kid blossomed into reality.  
What a debt of gratitude I owe this  
versatile, creative artist.  
The entire cast laughed, talked, argued,  
joked and worked hard, and gradually

fused into the closely-knit family that  
existed for six years; W. O. Mitchell's  
from Crocus, Saskatchewan.  
I cherish the friendship between  
John Drainie and the Kid. I shall miss him.

---

*by Billie Mae Richards*



John Drainie was, in his way, a master of the English tongue. Such men are rare. English is a hard tool, for writing or for conversation or for acting. Few writers can shed the faults, eschew the clumsy or the pretentious, and achieve a true but fresh style; few people can speak well impromptu; and few actors have a flawless ear. Yet all of those few, when we meet them, are able to persuade us that English really is one of the world's five great tongues. The rest of us can only admire, be grateful, and imitate. And when one of those few dies, the whole house of language must mourn its loss.

English does, after all, have its own peculiar genius: So long as men are true to what is best in it and what is proper to it, it will remain a clear and noble instrument; and if it is ceasing to be one, that is because too few men know or care. And there are two kinds of enemy: the fossilisers, who resist change and believe the language can be fixed in an ideal state but forget that it is always renewed from the gutter and not from the schoolroom; and the anarchists, who confuse liberty with license and admit any usage without judging whether it is good or bad. Against these enemies the few masters (who alone are always students) stand firm.

Not many of them create. They nourish the language, but seldom by invention. Rather they listen: listen, and read; they are eavesdroppers and bookworms. To most of us a bus or a pub is a way to travel or a place to drink: to a good writer or a

good actor they are sources of raw material, where he may overhear what he can use. To most of us a book is a means to pleasure or information: to a good writer or a good actor it is a piece of stuff shaped by a fellow-craftsman who may have something to teach. And from our babel of speech and print he collects, with a magpie ear and eye: stores up, rejects what is stale or dull or not for him, chooses what he can make his own; and then gives it back. For he is perpetually in love with the language: to him a fresh nuance of meaning or a new inflection or a rediscovered usage or a just image gives all the keen delight a gourmet gets from a supreme meal or a hockey fan from some adroit manoeuvre; the difference is that he can repay the debt, enriching the language and the world with the gold he has mined. Of this select company John Drainie was an eminent member. He was one of those gifted few who by serving the language could make it in the end serve him. Some seem almost born with this capacity. He was not. He acquired it by long hard work. Over the years he refined and widened his craft till almost no technical feat in English was beyond him: but none of this had come easily, and each of his roles reflected his career in miniature; he could stumble through a first rehearsal like a novice, then he would spend hours going over the script and marking it profusely with his own unique brand of hieroglyphics, and finally he would emerge with a perform-

ance as complete as a Bach fugue, all the notes dead right and some of them astounding. Yet none of this was mere technique, coldly calculated and empty. His technique was vast, but was never an end in itself. Always it was simply the means to portray the character and to convey the author. Other actors perhaps have had superficially the same dexterity: but the ability to speak 197 dialects accurately at any age-level is not often accompanied by the two other prerequisites of greatness, a profoundly compassionate insight into character and a ceaseless concern with what the play means; Drainie had all three gifts in abundance.

Listing a handful of his roles gives some idea of his range: Everyman, Oedipus, Mr. Pickwick, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, St. Augustine, Anatol, Vanzetti, Jeeves, Jesus, Earl Long, Turvey, Clarence Darrow, The Canterville Ghost, Beowulf, Leacock, W. B. Yeats, Captain Slocum, Joseph Haydn, The Investigator, Tony Weller, Job, Orestes, Richard II, Robert Burns, Mr. Arcularis, Jack Worthing, Jake, The White Knight, A Whooping Crane, a Fieldmouse, A Shirehorse, The Drunkard, Adonis, Don Juan . . . The list could go on for the rest of this page and not exhaust his versatility: it would embrace the fluent English of all five continents and nearly every kind of broken English too; also it would include the singing of songs and the speaking of rhythmic parts in symphonic compositions. Even if the list were given





complete, of every role he ever undertook, it would contain no duplications — at least in work of any worth. If he was faced with a badly written role in a worthless work he did have a bunch of stock characters he could draw on, to fill the gap the author had left him; and he filled it so convincingly you seldom knew he was treating you to Personage No. 65 from the third drawer in the filing cabinet on the left. But in scripts of any quality at all, there was never a trace of the stereotype in his characterisations: other actors assume a character like clothes; he built his from the spine outward. That's why he was able to do so much: he wormed his way via the script into the core of the role and then came back out transmuted; any other approach was, to him, false and shallow; understanding was the key. It was on

this that the validity of all his playing rested. His voice, if you listened carefully, was not impressively powerful or rich or appealing; he could not let it do the work for him, as Burton can and Gielgud thinks he can; he did stretch it to astonishing limits, but it never became a great instrument in itself. The essence of his greatness was in his mind. He never forgot that his chief job was to match exactly the meaning of what he said and the way he said it; he did this supremely well because he understood both completely; and he attached value to this work in direct proportion to the value of the whole content, grounding his art on the hope that it should make men wise. Wise through laughter, or wise through grief. This was the complete actor. His tragic playing had none of the shams of a clown trying on a different mask. His

comedy had none of the condescension of your grand tragedian: it was a disciplined tumult, a gale. At each extreme, and in between, he gave enormously and we were all enriched. Now we have only the memory, and some of the tapes for posterity. Everyone will especially remember his own favourite performance: a heroic role, perhaps, or an offbeat character role, or one of the short stories. For me it will forever be his reading of T. S. Eliot's "Four Quartets," the crowning work of this century's best poet spoken by an actor worthy of it: it is an immensely difficult text and he had to take it to pieces like a clock until he understood the function and mechanism of every smallest part; when he put it together again there could be only one response: Here was a master.

---

*by John Reeves*



All that talent, all that unswerving enthusiasm and caring and dedication—and now gone. We were filming him, Lister Sinclair and I, in the week of his death, not an obituary, but a portrait sketch of the man today and the life and work that glowed behind him. Then, abruptly, in the middle of it, he was gone. Full stop. There was only the shock and unspeakableness of it. Boots on, yes, in the going—just the way

he wanted it—with lights and cameras and microphones mixed in with family and friends and colleagues. But for someone like me, who had known him as a friend for more than thirty years, starting when we were kids in the back lanes of Vancouver—then in radio, theatre, television, films, life itself going on—for anyone at all who knew him, briefly or at length, there was nothing at hand to lighten the impact of his absence. He was

gone, and that was cruelly that. If an actor is a sculptor who carves in snow, as Edwin Booth observed before the age of film and tape, then the actor is only alive in memory. But even with the repeatable actuality of celluloid and the electronic pulse, human memories remain richer, clearer, less liable to melt—and closer to the heart. We all have memories, and John lives in ours where he belongs—as part of our lives.

---

*by Fletcher Markle*



Gusto was the thing about John Drainie. Gusto is that fine old-fashioned quality of finding out, of enjoying what you find out, and sharing it. John had a zest, a happy curiosity, and a delight in communicating. An actor, he took his cue from life, not from the theatre. That is why he was able to bring into the performing arena a freshness and a light we don't always find there.

I met John first in December, 1939. Our close professional association lasted for almost sixteen years; but our friendship has lasted to the end.

Oh, yes, we had differences of opinion from time to time, but since they were differences bred by glee for the work and the world, they only made the comradeship stronger. Having a tussle with John Drainie about some matter that was consuming his attention was one of most stimulating experiences imaginable. The memories that some of us have of late-night sessions with John we would not swap for a universe of blandness.

Several years ago, when he came home after a long time in Europe, we had a talk, renewing things, catching up on the gap. Just before we had to part, he gazed impishly into the distance and complimented me on having stood up pretty well, on having mellowed gracefully. Then he shot a full look at me. "But do me a favor, Andrew," said he: "for heaven's sake, soon again, get mad about something!" That was one of the beauties of John: he kept us on our toes. It was hard not to be at your best when he so obviously was determined to be at his. And his best was so very good.

Some of the hundreds of radio performances in which I had the privilege of being his director have been marching like stalwart ghosts through my head in the last hours. There were times when one was the director, but there were others when one was mute witness at a miracle. Mr. Arcularis is impossible to forget—and the White Knight in "Through the Looking-Glass"—the Tattered Man in

"Heart of Darkness"—the Honorable Augustus Windheaver in "Sarah Binks"—that towering evocation, The Investigator. For years to come, wherever two or three of John's friends are gathered together, the list of the precious things will grow. And I think this will be true in every part of the country, wherever people heard or saw him. He was welcome in so many homes, and for so long, though not nearly long enough. His amazing virtuosity and versatility made it seem sometimes that there were all the other actors, and then there was John Drainie. And a mark of the esteem and affection in which John was held by all the other actors is that every one of them will agree in this.

Behind the man, behind the artist, behind the communicator, was always the boy in John. This is the secret of creativeness. The boy is the curious seeker, the finder-out, the one who brings home trophies. John, in Shakespeare's sweet phrase, was "boy eternal."

---

*by Andrew Allan*



John Drainie was a great actor because he was a great artist, and a great artist because he was a great man. He was also the most beloved artist in Canada. We were all enriched and cheered by his courage and humour. He died doing what he loved best: acting and talking about acting, in the place that he loved best: surrounded by his family.

Every writer and director wanted to have Drainie in his cast. Of course, this was because he was the greatest radio actor in the world. But his performance always did something special for the play, particularly from the writer's point of view. John regarded himself as the custodian of the Word; and he spoke the fascinating words of the English language with love and devotion. But he had the ability to see what the writer really intended. Drainie's performance was nearly always funnier, or sadder or more dramatic than the writer had managed to put down. Above all, his performances were wiser than all except the greatest writers. And in dealing with the greatest dramatic writers, Shakespeare, Ibsen, Strindberg, Shaw, Miller, John rose to his greatest heights. He was at his best as an artist with the best material. And when he was at his best, he drew the rest of us up to his level, for he was completely generous as an artist and as a man. We all drew light from his warmth,

wisdom, and courage.

He was a very emotional man, given to passionate campaigns of enthusiasm. All his friends remember his wine connoisseur phase, his chess master phase, and so on. But he never really lost enthusiasm for any of his interests. His life was not much spent in replacing one thing by another but by attempting to broaden his interests. He was also a good hater, bearing down particularly hard on cruelty, stupidity and injustice. He was an excitable and spiky man, hanging about the studios, angry and gleeful, scatter-brained and single minded, steering hard on a stormy sea of rich and rasping feelings, the lovely divine zest of slopping about at every step. At first glance, he was the model of the romantic view of the artistic personality: childlike and immoderate. But although Drainie had a warm heart, he had a bright and chilly brain. And the first thing it did for him was to draw up the catalogue of his defects: the painful lameness he inherited from a childhood accident. Most of his life his legs bothered him. So one of his private victories was to keep life interesting in the midst of the pointless boredom of pain. He soon learned to place his trust in his voice. The final result was such a marvellous instrument, used so superbly that it's almost impossible to remember how John's voice began. Not as well as it

ended. It's natural qualities were rather light and colourless. Everything that came out had been put into it by John himself. The other great thing that his brain did for him was to steer him clear of the defects of his virtues. Powerful feelings are wonderful for an artist, but they must be under control. Drainie, a very emotional personality, made himself into a uniquely controlled and cerebral actor. He was an intelligent man and he used his intelligence to make himself into a better artist. His scripts were carefully marked. Almost every word seemed to be underlined, and marked with private symbols. Drainie's easy relaxed performances arose from his jungle of hieroglyphics. The power of his emotions was controlled and channelled by his carefully learned technique.

At best, an actor's art is a fragile structure built in time by the imaginations of the audience. But radio, television and film have made it possible to record performances. They can record the way Drainie acted. They cannot record the way we felt at the time of his performance; they cannot record the wonderful aptness which was always directed towards the feelings of the audience in the present. We can still listen to Drainie's voice in the Investigator, and we can marvel at the remarkable impersonation of Senator McCarthy. But that performance was



more than impersonation. Drainie's power as an impersonator showed up McCarthy. His power as an actor showed up his audience; the way many of us then felt about McCarthy. The recording still shows the archer's skill; but we have to remember now that all those arrows were aimed that day exactly where the chinks in our armour were then to be found. It sounds the same, but it doesn't feel the same.

There are no longer theatrical knighthoods in Canada. If there were, John Drainie should have had one long ago. The theatrical community and the CBC will honour him in the months to come. The Province of Ontario has already helped to recognize the way we feel about him by founding a John Drainie Memorial Fellowship. Let us hope that his native city, Vancouver, and his adopted city, Toronto, will also commemorate him.

Above all the Federal Government should do something to demonstrate that Canada is able to remember her greatest actor. The Canada Council Medal can, and should be, awarded posthumously. But the Federal Government has in its power the chance to make the first presentation of the yet unawarded Canada Medal.

We will not find a more worthy recipient.

---

*by Lister Sinclair*

All of us in the acting company which grew up in the years of the Sunday Night "Stages" learned from each other. Probably the one of us who learned least from the others was John Drainie—because he was too busy originating and inventing. How much *I* absorbed was brought home to me shortly before he died, when I was listening to a tape of a scene I had just played. There were echoes of Drainie all through the fussy old

character I was playing . . . and the important thing is that this wasn't merely imitation: it was just an automatic application of the constant acting lesson which went on whenever one worked with John. For any actor with an agile tongue and a flexible voice, it's easy to play a wide range of characters and be a man of a hundred voices. What John Drainie did was something much greater than that: he played a thousand characters with only

a few voices. When you listened to him on radio, your ear would tell you: "That's John," but your heart and mind believed it was Jake or the Brass-Pounder or Leacock or Sir John A. Macdonald—or whatever he wanted you to believe. In Tommy Tweed's two 2-hour scripts in which Drainie played Sir John A., a character kept yelling at meetings: "You'll never die, John A.!" Perhaps in our acting company we might change the A. to D.

by *Alan King*









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Association of Canadian  
Television and Radio  
Artists

John Drainie, 1916-1966

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